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TAGS: PREL KMDR KPAL KWBG KPAO IS

SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (03/25): PONDERING THE IMPACT OF THE DOHA SUMMIT ON PALESTINIAN TALKS

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Main Stories:  
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Al Quds and Al Hayat Al Jadida lead with confrontations between Arab-Israelis and Israeli police in Um Al Fahm town in Israel on March 24. The confrontations erupted when Israeli "rightwing settlers" attempted to hold a rally, "waving Israeli flags, under police protection." The rally "provoked" residents to ask the "settlers" to leave and clashes ensued, according to coverage. Several people were injured, including activists and policemen, who arrested Arab citizens, papers note.

Al Ayyam leads with Egyptian invitations to Palestinian factions to resume reconciliation talks in Cairo on April 1, following the Arab summit in Doha. The report, which features on all front pages, adds that contacts have intensified among factions, "to iron out differences" in preparation of declaring a, "Cairo Document on Unity and Agreement." Al Quds runs an inside page caricature with two women wondering if April 1 was picked as the date for new talks in honor of April Fools Day.

Al Quds and Al Ayyam front page a UK-based daily Guardian report about Israeli forces using Palestinian boys as human shields during the recent Gaza conflicts, and the use of drones to bomb medical teams and hospitals. The report quotes Israeli Army sources denying these accusations and adding that the Army acted in accordance with international law. Al Quds cites Reuters in quoting a retired Israeli Army commander, asserting that Israeli attempts to protect their own military personnel during the conflict led to higher Palestinian civilian casualties. Al Ayyam's front page reports that Israel condemned the recent report by UN Human Rights Rapporteur Richard Falk that calls for the investigation of Israel for possible war crimes committed during the Gaza Cast Lead operation. Reporting also notes statements by State Department spokesman Robert Wood

describing the Falk report as, "not objective" and stating that though the U.S. would not seek to block an investigation into war crimes, such an investigation should be objective.

All front pages run an AFP report about the Israeli Labor party joining a coalition government with Likud under the premiership of Netanyahu. Papers note that Labor head Ehud Barak would retain the defense portfolio.

Al Quds highlights a front page report citing DPA about an Israeli decision to deploy a "Steel Dome" system around the Gaza Strip to intercept rockets and projectiles fired into Israel.

Al Quds' inside page runs an AFP report revealing that two human rights groups; the Legal Center on Freedom to Travel and Doctors for Human Rights, have accused Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, and Egypt of keeping the Gaza Rafah crossing closed. The paper also runs an inside report by Israeli human rights group, B'Tselem, noting increased Israeli violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, following the Israeli operation in Gaza.

Al Quds and Al Hayat Al Jadida run an inside report on a meeting between U.S. Consulate General staff and Palestinian Authority Chief Islamic Judge Taysir Tamimi in Ramallah on March 24. Tamimi briefed the delegation on Israeli negative practices targeting Palestinian Jerusalemites and Palestinian institutions and cultural activities in Jerusalem. Tamimi also demanded the U.S. administration pressure Israel to stop settlement activities and "violations" against Islamic and Christian shrines in Jerusalem.

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Al Quds runs an inside DPA report revealing that U.S. Embassy staff in Beirut met with their counterparts at the Iranian Embassy in Lebanon. The report notes that both Embassies denied holding such meetings.-----

BLOCK QUOTES:

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1) Hani Habib opines in Al Ayyam under the title, "The Palestinian... Doha summit"(03/25): "What happens at the Doha meeting will set the course for and determine the nature of Palestinian-Palestinian dialogue in Cairo. We expect a halt to dialogue, if we carefully read the agenda for the summit."

2) Hamada Farana writes in Al Ayyam, "No alternative but to sign and agree"(03/25): "The resistance factions, especially Fatah and Hamas have entered the reconciliation tunnel, and they will emerge united by consent or after being forced by the stick... The agreement is on the way, it simply requires time and patience until it is signed."

WALLES